

Program Overview

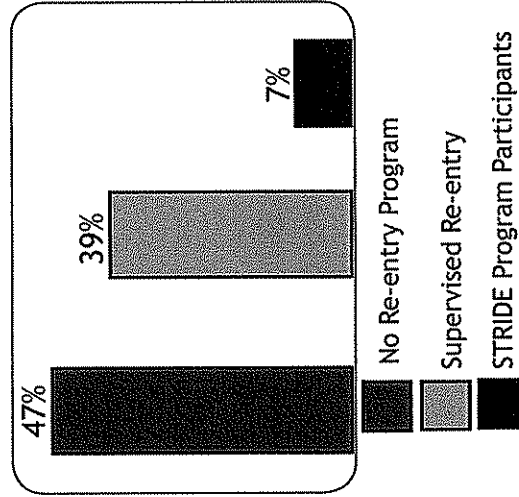


STRIDE is a unique, state funded transitional support workforce development program operating within the Quinebaug Valley Community College's Center for Community & Professional Learning.

The STRIDE Program serves a targeted group of incarcerated men and women, both pre and post-release, from York Correctional Institute in Niantic, CT and Bergin Correctional Institute in Storrs, CT.

The class curriculum and post-release services are collaboratively designed to assist the men and women in successfully re-entering the workforce upon release and to resume their parental roles.

CT Recidivism Rate Comparison



*Based upon a 2006 study on prison recidivism in Connecticut conducted by the Department of Correction & Central Connecticut State University's Institute for the Study of Crime & Justice.

S KILLS...participants will identify their unique soft and technical skills

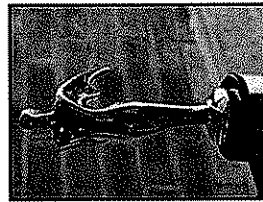
T RANSITION...participants receive services & supports for successful transition to the community

R ESPECT...participants develop respect for their employment potential based on the development of their resumes

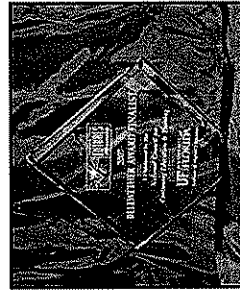
I NTEGRITY...participants re-establish personal & professional integrity through the identification of work related values and personal criteria

D IRECTION...participants develop unique employment goals that promote job success & satisfaction

E MPLOYMENT...participants will become employed in positions that match existing skills and capabilities



2007 Bronze Telly Award for STRIDE Video



2007 Bellwether Award Finalist - Workforce Development

CONTACT INFORMATION

If you have questions about the STRIDE program, contact our office at QVCC

Julie Scrapchansky, Program Coordinator
 jscrapchansky@qvcc.commnet.edu
 860-412-7320

QVCC does not discriminate on the basis of race, religion, color, national origin, age, gender, disability, or sexual orientation.

9/09

STRIDE[®] program

Stepping into the Future
with Pride and Purpose



PROGRAM PERIOD

September 2009 - June 2010



QUINEBAUG VALLEY
COMMUNITY COLLEGE

www.qvcc.commnet.edu/STRIDE/index.html

2009-2010 STRIDE

Deliverables

York Correctional Institute

| | |
|----------------------------------------------------------|-----|
| Number of program participants to be recruited: | 160 |
| Number of program participants to be served: | 60 |
| Number of participants placed in full or part-time jobs: | 40 |
| Number of participants retaining employment: | 30 |

Belgian Correctional Institute

| | |
|----------------------------------------------------------|-----|
| Number of program participants to be recruited: | 113 |
| Number of program participants to be served: | 60 |
| Number of participants placed in full or part-time jobs: | 40 |
| Number of participants retaining employment: | 30 |

* Based on a 9-month fiscal year

Participant Eligibility Criteria

- Must have confirmed release date prior to June 2010
- Must be a non-custodial parent of a child under age 18
- Must have children who are now or have been on state assistance
- Must be committed to becoming employed and remaining in the community
- Must be able to make and keep scheduled appointments with STRIDE staff, both on a pre- and post-release basis

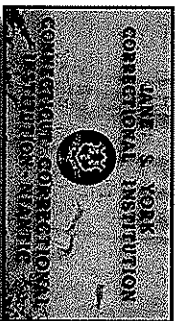
Pre-Release Group Modules

Job Readiness

- Work related values/personal criteria
- Personal/employment goal setting
- Self-esteem/self-awareness
- Time management
- Identification of transferable skills
- Transition planning & resource acquisition
- Communication and interpersonal skills

Job Search

- Resume writing
- Cover letters
- Interviewing
- Networking
- Labor market trends
- Utilizing community based resources
- Job Placement
- Defining your work ethic
- Conflict resolution
- Understanding employer expectations
- Career advancement and training
- Success and satisfaction on the job



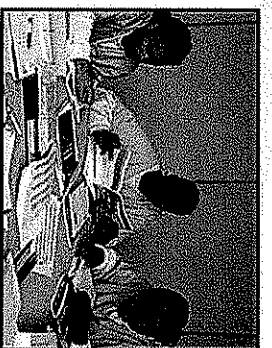
Partners & Supports

- Department of Labor
- Department of Social Services
- Department of Correction
- Quinebaug Valley Community College
- State of CT Judicial Branch Support Enforcement Unit

Positive Participant Outcomes

Participants will:

- Become employed in productive, long-term employment upon release into the community
- Gain knowledge of resources available to them in the community
- Understand their unique worker attributes and understand alternative conflict resolution strategies
- Develop short-term and long-term career goals based on continuing education opportunities
- Understand statewide labor market trends and demands
- Generate resumes, cover letters, and become comfortable with interviewing
- Develop an awareness of their current transferable skills as they relate to the world of work
- Restore their self-respect and confidence, and build self-esteem

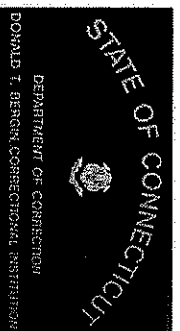


Notes from STRIDE Participants

"The STRIDE Program helped build my self-confidence, gave me the strength I needed to not give up, and the hope that I will make it after incarceration."

"STRIDE's support helped me to successfully return to my community and reunite back with my children and family."

"STRIDE was the life line I needed while serving time. STRIDE helped me to re-align my priorities and focus on the big picture."



STRIDE Testimony to the Appropriations Committee February 17, 2010

I would like to thank you for allowing me to speak regarding the STRIDE Program. STRIDE stands for Skills, Transition, Respect, Integrity, Direction and Employment.

The STRIDE Program provides incarcerated and paroled women and men, who are non-custodial parents of children in receipt of Temporary Aide To Needy Families (TANF) benefits from the state of Connecticut, with occupational and job search skills and resources necessary to enter competitive employment positions in CT.

I would like to publically say thank you to the Appropriations Committee for your leadership and for hearing our testimony today.

STRIDE is made possible through the collaborative efforts of Connecticut's visionary state legislators, CT Department of Corrections, CT Department of Labor, CT Department of Social Services and Quinebaug Valley Community College.

In your packet in front of you, we have provided statistical and documented outcomes of our very successful re-entry program.

Since the program's inception in 1999, we have served over 800 women and men from York Correctional in Niantic and Bergin Correctional in Storrs. Our average recidivism is as low as 7% while recidivism rates in the state are as high as 56% without re-entry programs in prison.

Not only has STRIDE reduced recidivism rates drastically, we have saved the State of Connecticut millions! Over \$7,848,960 in savings since 1999. This number is based on using \$89.60 per cost of incarceration in Connecticut per the Department of Correction statistics FY 08/09.

STRIDE is a re-entry program that enhances public safety through continued support and case management in the community.

Governor Rell has her emphasis this year in "cutting the fat" from state Government and in "Creating Jobs".

How is a nearly 100% effective Re-Entry program "Government fat?"

How is a program with a proven track record and is cost-effective considered to be government fat?

Our program costs \$270,000 to fund per year...If 70 individuals we served were re-incarcerated for one year due to lack of services and support from the STRIDE program, the cost would be: \$2.3 million.

Now that speaks volumes...

There is no fat in funding the STRIDE Program. The STRIDE program should be fully funded.

The true key to STRIDE's success is our post-release component. No matter what compassionate acts are delivered within the walls, those female and male felons who walk out of the prison gates free are confronted with an imposing obstacle course of barriers. Criminal justice statistics support that the critical components of a successful transition from prison to community are **a job and continuity of care**. STRIDE offers consistency of contact and committed follow-up. STRIDE paves access to employers who are willing to consider ex-offenders for prospective employment and can offer them the first step in building a proven track record. The term "**ex-offender**" is truly a misnomer unless community leaders, employers, and the public at large grant these individuals the opportunity to leave their criminal history in the distant past. In order for an offender to do that, she/he must be groomed and guided, prepared and praised, reassured and redirected; all facets that are integral components of STRIDE. Without a human connection at this crucial juncture, the momentum is lost, and all good discharge planning is for nothing.

STRIDE is the bridge between incarceration and independence; without which, many of these women and men will falter and fail. This gap translates to repeat and prolonged incarceration at a great financial cost to State taxpayers, but also and more importantly, another failure that pushes this person closer to hopelessness.

Many of the individuals that find themselves in the STRIDE Program do not view themselves as people who will succeed in life or have the opportunities that others seem to have. One of the most amazing aspects of the STRIDE Program is witnessing the transformation of those individuals when those beliefs start to change. Through the curriculum and our honest but caring approach in the classroom, these men and women are able to identify their strengths, skills, and value, not only as potential employees, but as people, parents, and members of our community. Quite often we meet a dejected, bitter inmate with little self-esteem, but we say goodbye to a person who leaves with hope, pride, and a solid plan of how they will approach their families, communities, and the job market. We are fortunate to be able to continue our work post-release with those individuals who have gone through our program pre-release. We become one of the few positive connections and support in an environment where family and friends have low expectations and do not support or encourage success. We are their advocate, their cheer leader, and their safety net.

**Please continue to fund the STRIDE Program to enhance public safety
and keep these women and men safe, healthy, employed and
productive in our state and local communities.**



State of Connecticut's Only Post Release Program for Women and Men

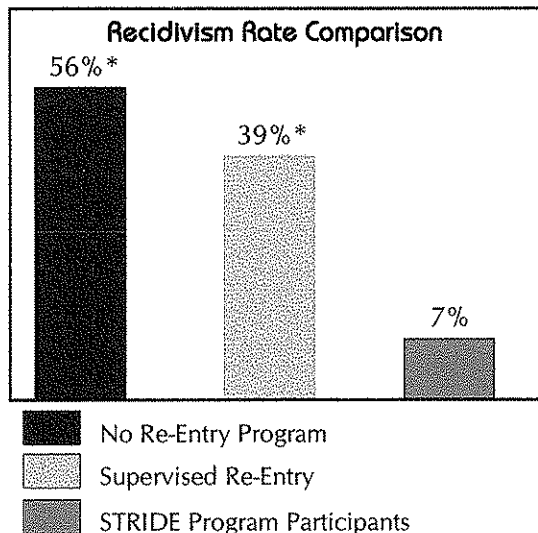
Skills • Transition • Respect • Integrity • Direction • Employment

STEPPING INTO THE FUTURE WITH PRIDE AND PURPOSE

- The STRIDE Program is a unique, state-funded reentry transitional support workforce development program operating within the Quinebaug Valley Community College's Center for Community & Professional Learning.
- The STRIDE Program serves a targeted group of incarcerated women and men, both pre- and post-release, from York Correctional Institute in Niantic, CT, and Bergin Correctional Institute in Storrs, CT.
- The class curriculum and post-release services are collaboratively designed with other state agencies to assist the women and men in successfully re-entering the workforce upon release, to resume their parental roles and become productive, employed members of their community.
- STRIDE is made possible through the collaborative efforts of CT's visionary state legislators, the CT Departments of Correction, Labor, Social Services Welfare to Work Initiative, and Support Enforcement Services.

STRIDE Information

- 752 Participants served since program inception in 1999
- 85% of participants reunite with their families
- **Reduced recidivism rates:** State of Connecticut — 39%
STRIDE Participants — 7% (Average from program inception)
- **Workforce development national finalist** at Community College Futures Assembly 2007 Bellwether Awards



**Based upon a 2009 CT Recidivism Study prepared by the Office of Policy & Management Criminal Justice Policy and Planning Division Research, Analysis and Evaluation Unit to the Governor and Legislature of CT.*

Cost Savings to State of Connecticut per Year

Without the STRIDE Program

752 Participants

293 Estimated Reconvicted (39% recidivism rate)

\$9,582,272

Cost to State*

With the STRIDE Program

752 Participants

53 Estimated Reconvicted (7% STRIDE recidivism rate)

\$1,733,312

Cost to State*

STRIDE Savings to State of CT

\$7,848,960

** Calculation made using \$89.60 Incarceration Cost Per Day based upon CT Department of Correction FY 08/09.*

QUINEBAUG VALLEY COMMUNITY COLLEGE

742 Upper Maple Street, Danielson, CT 06239

STRIDE Contact: Julie Scrapchansky, Program Coordinator

E-Mail: jscrapchansky@qvcc.commnet.edu • (860)412-7320

Rev. 5/31/09



Skills • Transition • Respect • Integrity • Direction • Employment

YORK CORRECTIONAL PROGRAM INFORMATION

Current Program Information

STRIDE Recidivism 3-Year Study 7/1/06 to 5/31/09

2006-2007: 88 participants served
2007-2008: 148 participants served
2008-2009: 95 participants served (as of 5/31/09)
Returned to York: 20 participants

Recidivism rate: 6%

Cumulative Program History

- Average recidivism rate from inception of program: **6%**
- Total applications received from inception of program: **1,575**
- Total participants served since inception of the program: **656**

As of FY 07-08 STRIDE secured 50 federal bonds from the McLaughlin Group in Washington D.C. for \$5,000. These bonds ensure employers against theft, fraud, forgery, and embezzlement.

Stepping Into the Future with Pride and Purpose

Quinebaug Valley Community College
742 Upper Maple Street
Danielson, CT 06239



Phone: 860-412-7320
Fax: 860-412-7318
Email: jscrapchansky@qvcc.commnet.edu



Skills • Transition • Respect • Integrity • Direction • Employment

BERGIN CORRECTIONAL PROGRAM INFORMATION

Program History

FY Breakdown (Bergin program began April 2008)

| | |
|--------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------|
| FY 2007-2008 | 64 applications received, 25 participants served |
| FY 2008-2009 | 151 applications received, 71 participants served (as of 5/31/09) |

Out of 96 participants served, 7 were re-incarcerated.

Recidivism rate: 7%

- Average recidivism rate from inception of program: **7%**
- Total applications received from inception of program: **219**
- Total participants served since inception of the program: **96**

As of FY 07-08 STRIDE secured 50 federal bonds from the McLaughlin Group in Washington D.C. for \$5,000. These bonds ensure employers against theft, fraud, forgery, and embezzlement.

Stepping Into the Future with Pride and Purpose

Quinebaug Valley Community College
742 Upper Maple Street
Danielson, CT 06239



Phone: 860-412-7320
Fax: 860-412-7318
Email: jscrapchansky@qvcc.commnet.edu

Skills ■ Transition ■ Respect ■ Integrity ■ Direction ■ Employment

Angela's Journey

Angela started out as a reluctant participant. When called to our office to do an intake for the next STRIDE session, she did not show up. It was then that we did something we have never done before, we decided to pursue her. Angela was working an event in the prison's gym when we caught up with her. She appeared as surprised as we were to have taken such action. After a short discussion, it was clear that Angela was feeling unmotivated and a little depressed. We convinced her to try the class with the option of dropping if it didn't meet her expectations or needs. Angela took us up on our offer and completed the program.

Angela was released from York Correctional Institute (YCI) in March of 2009. She engaged with community resources and providers, was successful in advocating for herself, and began job searching right away. She reunited with her two daughters and her mother, whom she lives with. Angela's youngest daughter was born at YCI and the work of forming a bond is ongoing. Most of our participants, upon returning to the community, are eager to get a place of their own. Angela, however, is able to appreciate the value of living with her mom, with benefits for herself and her children, as well as for her mother. The children retain the stability of staying where they have been secure and



cared for in Angela's absence.

Three months after her release from YCI, Angela found full time employment with Neilson Media Research as a commercial analyst.

Recently Angela shared how she benefited directly from her STRIDE experience, mentioning several times the benefit of having a resume. She said she knew how to dress properly and that a firm handshake and good eye contact were important. Through our mock interview process she gained the knowledge to answer key interview questions correctly and the confidence to be honest about her felony. Angela reported she used the many different job search methods taught to her in class such as the internet, networking, and utilizing her local CT Works office. Although she does not have her license, a goal she has set for herself, she takes the bus and is aided by her siblings for transportation.

Angela represents many of the individuals in Connecticut prisons who benefit from supportive Re-entry programming and caring providers.

- by Wendy Walker

Steve's Road to Success

We met Steve in June 2008 at Bergin Correctional Institute (BCI) where he was serving a mandatory sentence for his 3rd DUI. As we did his intake, he stated he had been drinking heavily since adolescence but he expressed his eagerness and motivation to turn his life around.

As Steve participated in the STRIDE Program, he was reliable, punctual and had good attendance. He quickly displayed leadership skills and was a positive role model for his peers. His maturity and insight was energizing for us as educators. Steve wanted to work on his self-confidence. We provided encouragement and opportunities for Steve to regain his confidence before re-entering the workforce.

Steve was released from BCI in November 2008. He quickly worked with the STRIDE Program regarding his job search. After the

holidays, he landed a full-time job at Celebration Foods on the production line for minimum wage. It was only a matter of time that he was being trained for a managerial position. In May 2009 Steve was promoted to Assistant Shift Manager, where he received benefits and a raise.

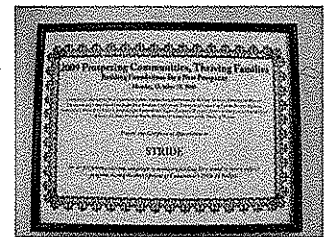
On a personal note, Steve has 2 daughters, who he enjoys spending time with on a regular basis and most recently, has become engaged. Over the past, Steve has maintained his sobriety by attending AA meetings and the love and support from his family and friends. Steve has remained in contact with the STRIDE Program, allowing us to follow his successful journey. In Steve's own words, "while it is tough out here, don't give up, keep trying and good things will come."

- by Sue Gunderman

Connecticut Alliance for Basic Human Needs Award

On October 19, 2009, STRIDE attended the 2009 Prospering Communities, Thriving Families Conference held at the Hartford Marriott Downtown. This conference has heightened significance for improving the lives of Connecticut's residents. The theme was "Building Foundations for a New Prosperity", consisting of an engaging forum to learn innovative approaches, best practices and new ideas that address the issues of community and family security.

STRIDE was awarded a Certificate of Appreciation for their tireless work on shaping the state budget in a variety of forums this year.



Other recipients included Speaker of the House Christopher Donovan and President of the Senate Don Williams; Appropriations Committee Co-Chair Senator Toni Harp (Co-Chair Rep. John Geragosian was unable to attend); Doug Hall, now director of EARN, Economic Analysis and Research Network, previously Director of Operations and Research at CT Voices for Children; and Better Choices for Connecticut, a broad-based state wide community coalition working to help Connecticut make the budgetary choices that reflect the priorities and values of its residents.

STRIDE was honored to be chosen by CABHN as a recipient of this year's award. Thank you!

- by Jennifer Eddy

Quotes from our Participants

"The class was great. I have learned a lot. The program was great—Wendy and Sue keep up the good work!"

- Jermaine

"Just keep doing what you are doing, it worked for me."

- Jesse

"It was a great experience working with STRIDE. I really look forward to taking the knowledge given and reenter society a better person."

- Michael

Would you like more information on STRIDE?

Contact Julie Scrapchansky at (860) 412-7320 or jscrapchansky@qvc.comnet.edu

Visit STRIDE's Web Page <http://www.qvc.comnet.edu/STRIDE/index.html>

STRIDE's Testimony to the Appropriations Committee

On November 22, the Governor announced her proposals to eliminate the projected \$466.5 million deficit for fiscal year 2010, of which \$116.3 million are cuts to programs which require legislative approval. The \$116.3 million in proposed cuts affect many programs for low-income people, including:

- Job training programs (STRIDE)
- Public health care programs
- Medicaid, SAGA and HUSKY B changes
- Cuts to numerous community agencies

On December 9, local elected officials, health care advocates, and hundreds of individuals and organizations gathered at the Legislative Office Building to give a three minute testimony to address the proposed cuts. STRIDE staff (Julie Scrapchansky and Jennifer Eddy) were among more than 350 individuals that attended. Below is the testimony given by Julie Scrapchansky, STRIDE Program coordinator, followed by probing questions from the Appropriations Committee.



Appropriations Committee, Christine Stuart Photo

TESTIMONY

I would like to thank you for allowing me to speak regarding the STRIDE Program. STRIDE stands for: SKILLS, TRANSITION, RESPECT, INTEGRITY, DIRECTION and EMPLOYMENT.

The STRIDE Program provides incarcerated and paroled women and men, who are non-custodial parents of children in receipt of TANF benefits from the State of Connecticut, with occupational and job search skills and resources necessary to enter competitive employment positions in CT.

I would like to publically say thank you to the Appropriations Committee for your leadership and for hearing our testimony today. In front of you in your packet, I have enclosed a fact sheet of the STRIDE Program since the inception in 1999. At this time, I would like to discuss with you the impact of the loss of the STRIDE Program for three months.

Since the inception of the STRIDE Program, our recidivism rate has been as high as 9% and as low as 5%. During our last fiscal year, Connecticut's unemployment rate in July of 2008 was 5.8% and in June of 2009 rose to 8%. This was an increase of 2.2%. The challenging economy and lack of jobs directly impacted our participants' ability to obtain employment. Our recidivism rate during this time rose to 11.5%.

The funding was cut for the **STRIDE Program**

during July, August, and September. Connecticut's unemployment increased by 3 tenths of a percent while our recidivism rate went up another 8%.

This shows the STRIDE Program has had a significant impact on the individuals it serves. Upon our return in September, we have taken another 5% rescission which continuous to slow down the progress we have been able to make. If the monies continue to be pulled from the STRIDE Program, our efforts to provide the necessary re-entry support services to individuals who are trying to rebuild their lives beyond incarceration will be diminished.

STRIDE is made possible through the collaborative efforts of CT's visionary state legislators, CT Department of Corrections, CT Department of Labor, CT Department of Social Services, and Quinebaug Valley Community College.

The true key to STRIDE's success is our post-release component. No matter what compassionate acts are delivered within the walls, those female and male felons who walk out of the prison gates free are confronted with an imposing obstacle course of barriers. Criminal justice statistics support that the critical components of a successful transition from prison to community are a **job and continuity of care**. STRIDE offers consistency of contact and committed follow-up. STRIDE paves access to employers who are willing to consider ex-offenders for prospective employment and can offer them the first step in building a proven track record. The term "ex-offender" is truly a misnomer unless community leaders, employers, and the public at large grant these individuals the opportunity to leave their criminal history in the distant past. In order for an offender to do that, she/he must be groomed and guided, prepared and praised, reassured and redirected; all facets that are integral components of STRIDE. Without a human connection at this crucial juncture, the momentum is lost, and all good discharge planning is for nothing. STRIDE is the bridge between incarceration and independence; without which, many of these women and men will falter and fail. This gap translates to repeat and prolonged incarceration at a great financial cost to State taxpayers, but also and more importantly, another failure that pushes this person closer to hopelessness.

Many of the individuals that find themselves in the STRIDE Program do not view themselves as people who will succeed in life or have the opportunities that others seem to have. One of the most amazing aspects of the STRIDE Program is witnessing the transformation of those individuals when those beliefs start to change. Through the curriculum and our honest but caring approach in the classroom, these men and women are able to identify their strengths, skills, and value, not only as potential employees, but as people, parents, and members of our community. Quite often we meet a dejected, bitter inmate with little self-

STRIDE Deliverables ~ Status Update

July 1, 2009 - December 31, 2009

(STRIDE returned 9/11/09)

Bergin Correctional

Recruitment Goal: 113
Actual 73

Participants Served Goal: 60
Actual 19

Job Placement Goal: 40
Actual 2

Job Retainment Goal: 30
Actual 6

York Correctional

Recruitment Goal: 160
Actual 76

Participants Served Goal: 60
Actual 22

Job Placement Goal: 40
Actual 8

Job Retainment Goal: 30
Actual 7

The STRIDE Program (Skills, Transition, Respect, Integrity, Direction, Employment) is a re-entry program that serves a targeted group of men and women, both pre- and post-release, from Bergin Correctional Institute, Storrs, CT, and York Correctional Institute, Niantic, CT. Since the inception of the program in 1999, STRIDE's successful model has helped to lower the recidivism rate of their participants to only 7% as compared to 47% for ex-offenders with no re-entry program.

esteem, but we say goodbye to a person who leaves with hope, pride, and a solid plan of how they will approach their families, communities, and the job market. We are fortunate to be able to continue our work post-release with those individuals who have gone through our program pre-release. We become one of the few positive connections and support in an environment where family and friends have low expectations and do not support or encourage success. We are their advocate, their cheer leader, and their safety net.

Please continue to fund the STRIDE Program to enhance public safety and keep these women and men safe, healthy, employed and productive in our state and local communities.

- by Julie Scrapchansky



Quinebaug Valley Community College
The Center for Community & Professional Learning
742 Upper Maple Street, Danielson, CT 06239
www.qvcc.commnet.edu/cpl